BEYOND THE SUNSET.

We were two little sisters, tired of noise and play,
Out in the orchard, watching the sun go down that day,
Watching the clouds of crimson fading through gold to gray.

Around the old white farmhouse, far as the eye could see,
Meadow and misty hill top, river and rock and tree,
Stretched an unbroken circle, and that was the world to me.

We watched the crimson fade through gold to gray in the west,
We heard the drowsy chirp of a small bird safe in its nest;
And into my small brain crept a puzzling thought unguessed.

What was there hid beyond those hills of darkening brown?
Were there cities tall and fair beyond our little town?
Were there a world beyond the place where the sun went down?

Clara was older than I—my oracle in those days—
"What is beyond the sunset?" I asked—"beyond the place
Where all things come to an end?" I waited and watched her face.

Then Clara, my little sister, tried to look old and wise,
Answering grave and earnest, seeing my troubled eyes;
"There's nothing beyond the sunset—nothing but clouds and skies.

"You never could reach the sunset, more than you could a star;
If people have ever tried it, no one knows where they are:
They never come back to tell us. It's ever and ever so far."

I have crossed the misty hills when the sun "went down" that day,
But memory sees them still and the pale clouds turning gray,
And the childish thought that came has never quite passed away.

For though the child is a woman, yet still, as the years increase,
I dream and wonder and question, longing for deeper peace,
What is beyond the sunset—the line where all things cease?

—Helen G. Hawthorne, in Christian at Work.

CHAPTER XXV.

I MEET MY LOVER, BUT ALAS, ALAS!

I was upstairs the day Mrs. Lawton's guest arrived and I did not know anyone was in the house until I walked into the parlor and suddenly found myself in the presence of the gentleman. The room was rather dark and the visitor's face was turned from me, else I should certainly have recognized him at once. As it was how great was the shock I sustained when Mrs. Lawton arose and introduced her nephew, saying:

"Miss Owens, this is my nephew, Mr. Hanley."

I came near sinking to the floor, and I am sure my heart came into my throat at a bound. To have met Will Hanley at all, in any place and under any circumstances, would have overpowered me, but to meet him there so unexpectedly shocked me beyond description. I suppose I acknowledged the introduction in some way, though I am not certain of it, by any means, and in fact I am not sure of anything that transpired at that time.

I dropped into a seat that was near and for a time my brain seemed to be in a whirl. For a moment I was unconscious, I think. Fortunately neither Mr. Hanley nor Mrs Lawton took any notice of me and my discomposure escaped detection. When I regained perfect consciousness Mr. Hanley and Mrs. Lawton were talking quietly, she asking questions regarding himself and he answering them. I listened, and I discovered after awhile that a letter or two had passed between them of late.

"Then," I thought, "he knew I was here, and perhaps he came to see me."

I had very little to base such thought or hope on, I confess, for he had not appeared any more pleased to meet me than he had when I saw him last, but I loved him yet, and I was anxious to believe he loved me. I was fondling the hope that it was for my sake he had come, and had almost deceived myself into believing it, when he gave me another shock that I thought must surely kill me.

"And now, Aunt Lawton," he said. "I have a little surprise for you. I am almost afraid to tell you what it is, for fear you will never forgive me for not informing you through my letter."

"What is it, Will?" Mrs. Lawton asked.

Will blushed and for an instant was silent. I flushed burning hot from head to foot and trembled like a leaf.

"Am I right?" I thought, "and is it true that he has come on my account? What else can he have in mind, except to inform his aunt that he knows me and that it is I he has come to see?"

I wait breathlessly for him to answer, and I do not wait long.

"Aunt," he said, "I did not like to write to you of a certain little matter, because I never told you that I was in love, and that I had some thought of getting married."

I was rigid with expectancy. Mrs. Lawton looked over her spectacles at Mr. Hanley but said nothing.

"Yes," he continued directly, "such is the case, and I realize now that I ought to have told you. But better late than never, so I will tell you now. It was out at Aunt Brown's that I met the dear girl I love. Her parents live there and we were children together. Her father is Daniel Owens, Aunt Brown's nearest neighbor."

I gasped for breath. My heart was in my throat, choking me till I could not breathe. It was me he had come to see—me he loved. He had said as much. He and I were children together and Daniel Owens was my father.

"He loved me," I cried in thought, "after all. He will be mine and I shall be his."

The happiness of that moment is beyond the bounds of language. There are no words that will portray it. It was heavenly. I listened with rapture, my heart all in a tumult, for his next words. He was coming to the climax and in his next sentence he must speak my name. His lips moved and I sat breathless.

"Yes," he continued, "I loved Miss Owens, and she was good enough to love me; and now—she is my wife. We were married only three days since, and she is at the village hotel waiting for you to welcome her."

Reader, I fainted. I wonder I did not die. I had suffered untold miseries and heartaches in my time, but never anything like what I experienced then. To be wrought up to the very apex of joy, then like a flash plunged down the steep abyss into the darkest despair is too terrible for pen to picture. With one sweep my hopes were all gone. Will Hanley was lost to me forever. He was the husband of my sister.

When I returned to consciousness Mrs. Lawton was bathing my face and chafing my hands. She appeared deeply anxious, evidently at a loss to account for my condition. She had never known me to faint before. I perplexed her still more, when I glanced quickly about the room, and in a hoarse whisper asked:

"Is he gone?"

"Who? Will Hanley?" she replied. "Yes, he's gone. But what of it?"

"Nothing," I answered. "Is he coming back?"

"Yes, directly."

"And—she—is she coming?"

"His wife? Certainly. He's gone to fetch her now."

"Mrs. Lawton," I said after a pause, "can you help me to my room? I am too weak to walk alone."

"You had better remain here a little while, Agnes," she replied. "You will get stronger directly."

"No, I want to go to my room."

Mrs. Lawton extended her hand and I arose. I could scarcely stand, but by leaning on her arm I managed to get out of the room and up the stairs, where I threw myself on the bed. Mrs. Lawton did not leave me, but took a seat by my side where she remained for near a minute gazing silently and thoughtfully into my face. At last she spoke.

"Agnes," she said, in sympathetic tones, "Will Hanley said something that hurt you. Will you tell me what it is?"

I only sobbed in reply. She waited an instant, then went on.

"Agnes," she said, "tell me if Will Hanley's wife is any connection of yours. The name is the same."

"She is my sister," I answered.

"Indeed!" Mrs. Lawton exclaimed. "I did not think at the time of any relationship that might exist between you. It is a common name."

Then there was a long pause during which Mrs. Lawton seemed undecided

"AGNES, DO YOU NOT KNOW ME?"

whether to drop the matter there or whether to pursue it further. Finally she arose and started from the room, but when she reached the door she turned back. She came and took my hands between hers and caressed them, expressing in that way the sympathy she could not speak.

"Agnes, I am sorry my nephew has come here with his wife," she said, finally, "and if I had known he should not have come. I would do nothing to bring trouble to you."

"I know that, Mrs. Lawton," I replied. "You have always consulted my happiness in everything."

"Yes, I have tried to make your stay with me as pleasant as I could. But not of that now, Agnes. I want to speak of your sister. Do you wish to avoid a meeting with her? Remember that while she was the cause of much suffering on your part, she was small and hardly accountable. She perhaps regrets all that now, and if she knew you she might love you."

I saw with a feeling of relief that Mrs. Lawton had not guessed my secret. She ascribed my emotions to the prospect of meeting my sister, and left Will Hanley entirely out of account. Yet I did not wish to see my sister under existing circumstances. As Mary Owens I should have been glad to meet her, and had she accepted my love I should have freely given it to her. But now it was different. I could not meet her as the wife of the man I loved and feel toward her as a sister should feel. I felt bitterly toward her, and for the time hated her.

Mrs. Lawton waited some time, and, getting no answer from me, she continued:

"It is a very ungenerous thing for sisters," she said, "to hold ill-feelings against each other, and I think you would be happier, Agnes, if you met your sister and showed a willingness to forgive the past and be friendly."

"Not to-day, Mrs. Lawton," I replied. "Perhaps I will see her to-morrow. I am tired and weak and sick, now, and I want to rest in quiet."

Just then a carriage drove up to the door.

"They have come," Mrs. Lawton remarked, "and I must go down. I will come up again as soon as I can."

She stooped and kissed me, then turned away. I waited until she was out of hearing, then I let the pent up tears flow.

"Why is it," I moaned, "that my sister must have everything and I nothing? Was it not enough that she had all the love and attentions at home, without taking from me the man I love? Ah! Heavens, is it right that she should take from me all I have? Is it just?"

I spent the day in my room musing and cherishing my grief; but when it grew dark I stole downstairs and out through the garden to the highway. I wanted action, and it was my intention to take a long walk in the open air. I felt it would do me good.

I took a course that led out into the country—a lonely lane where there was little prospect of meeting anyone at that time of evening. I walked a couple of miles about, then turned to retrace my steps. It had grown quite dark by that time, but before I reached home the moon rose.

I reached the garden gate and was in the act of entering when a form suddenly barred the way. One glance told me whose form it was, and, placing my hand to my heart, I shrank back, hoping to avoid detection. I was too late, however, for Will Hanley had seen me, and immediately came forward.

"Agnes," he said, extending his hand, "do you not know me?"

I realized that I should be self-possessed, if possible, for to show any emotion would reveal the secret of my soul—the secret of a disappointed love, which I would not have him know for all the world. I exerted myself, and assumed an air of tolerable calmness.

"Yes," I replied, holding out my hand, "I know you."

He took my hand and gave it a warm pressure, which sent a sharp pain through my heart. He bent his eyes on me for an instant inquiringly, then said:

"Are you not glad to see me, Agnes?"

"Yes, very glad," I answered.

"I am not sure of that," he replied, letting my hand drop. "You have given me no welcome, and your greeting is cold. We used to be such good friends, and our separation has been so long that it seems you ought to show a little joy at our meeting. Did you not recognize me to-day when you came into the room where I was?"

"Yes."

"And yet you gave me no welcome?"

"No," I admitted, "I did not. Neither did you evince any sign of pleasure in meeting me."

"I did not know you, Agnes, and I would not know you now had not aunt told me who you were. Do you think I have so far forgotten our childhood friendship as to treat you like a stranger?"

"More than two years ago, Mr. Hanley," I said, "we met and were introduced by Mr. Charles Cornell, and yet you did not choose to recognize me."

"I did not know you even then, Agnes. Remember how changed you were since I had seen you last."

"But Mr. Cornell spoke my name."

"Yes; he introduced you as Miss Owens, but how was I to know, or even guess, that you were Agnes Owens? I say, remember how you were changed. When I left you to go away to school your face was all scarred and drawn, and when I met you again the scars were all gone and your features were perfect. There are hundreds of Miss Owens; and, aside from the change in your appearance, it is not a matter of wonder that I did not recognize you there where I had no thought of meeting you."

What he said seemed plausible, and I did not doubt the truth of it. I believed now that he had not intentionally ignored me, and that afforded me a little relief; but it was very little in the face of the knowledge that he was lost to me, and that no reconciliation could ever result. Friendship would not answer between us any more. It must be love or a complete separation, and with us it could not be love.

"Agnes," he continued, "I accidentally learned from the Cornells several months after our meeting that it was you to whom Charles Cornell introduced me. Then I went immediately in search of you, but on making inquiry of Mr. Bernard I learned that you had disappeared, and no one could give any information as to your whereabouts."

He paused as if undecided whether to say more or not, but finally he went on:

"I did not seek for you, Agnes, because after talking with Bernard and Mrs. Bond I felt that I would rather not see you again. You know what I mean."

"Yes, Mr. Hanley, I know what you mean," I replied, looking bravely up into his face and speaking with startling firmness. "You believed the lies they told you, and thought me the base thing they represented me to be."

He blushed and dropped his eyes in confusion.

"How could I know, Agnes?" he asked, sadly. "Their stories were ingenious and I could not persuade myself that they were all false, as hard as I tried to do so. You cannot imagine, Agnes, what I suffered because of those reports. They hurt me through and through. Agnes, I have no right to say it now, but I will say it once; I loved you then, and when I realized that you were lost to me, my grief was almost unbearable. I prayed that our paths might never cross again, and I tried to forget you."

My soul towered aloft now, and I felt so far superior to Will Hanley that I looked down on him with pity.

"Mr. Hanley," I said, "I, too, pray that our paths may never cross again. I know you now as I never knew you before, and from henceforth we cannot be even friends. The awakening to a true knowledge of your disposition is bitter, because I never thought you could so wrongfully misjudge me. All the long years when I had no friends and no sympathy I solaced myself with the thought that you were my friend, and that however others might misjudge me you would always understand me and believe in my honesty. But now that thought proves but a dream, and it is gone."

"Agnes," he said, "do not condemn me. I know I was wrong, and that you have a right to despise me for ever doubting you an instant. But I was a fool, and I have hurt myself worse than I have hurt you. Try to find some excuse for me, Agnes, won't you?"

"No, Mr. Hanley," I answered, "there is no excuse for you. You turned against me in my darkest hour, and preferred to believe the vile slanders that were uttered against me rather than believe in me."

"Will you not forgive me, Agnes?" he asked, pleadingly.

"Yes," I replied, "I will forgive you, but I will never forget. Henceforth I must think of you differently from what I have in the past. We can never again be friends."

"Never?" he echoed, sadly.

"No, never," I answered, firmly.

I passed through the gate and started toward the house. I heard him sigh, and then in a moment he came after me, and taking my hand spoke hoarsely.

"Agnes, for God's sake," he said, "do not be so hard and unfeeling. Do not part from me like this. You do not know how bitter and cruel it is. You say you will forgive, Agnes; won't you forget, too? We cannot be to each other now more than friends, but let us be that, Agnes; say that you will forget, and think of me as a friend."

His behavior was so strange, his words so warm, earnest and excited, that I was alarmed. I believed he loved me better than he loved his wife, and for an instant the thought sent a thrill of pleasure through me. But I banished it at once, and assuming an air of conscious rectitude I spoke with firmness.

"Mr. Hanley," I said, "remember yourself. We are nothing to each other now, and from this time forth our paths lie apart. I forgive you, but we can never be the friends we were. Good-by."

I tore my hand from his grasp and ran across the garden to the house. He called my name two or three times, but I gave no heed. As I entered the door a groan full of anguish escaped him.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

COULD SPEAK FRENCH.

A Reputation as a Linguist Based on Three Words.

France fought against Russia in the Crimean war, not because it had any quarrel with that country, but because Napoleon III. thought his future interests would be served best by entering into an alliance with the English. The Russian and French soldiers had no animosities, and when an occasion offered during a cessation of hostilities, fraternized in the most friendly way. They exchanged articles of food and drink, and called one another "comrade."

At one time, during a truce, a squad of French soldiers who had been sent as an escort to officers who were engaged in pourparlers was surrounded by a large party of Russians. The soldiers of the two nationalities were trying to communicate.

A big Cossack stepped up and assured his companions, in his own tongue, that he could speak French. He was put forward as spokesman.

"*Avance, com'rade!*" he called out.

A French soldier stepped toward him.

"*Apporte, rhum!*" said the Cossack.

It happened that one of the French soldiers had a flask of rum, an article which was rather plentiful in the Crimea at that time. He brought it forward and handed it to the Cossack, who swallowed several mouthfuls from the bottle.

"*Couche, com'rade!*" was the Russian's next remark.

The Frenchman was somewhat puzzled by this request, as *coucher* signifies to lie down, and he could not imagine why the Russian wished to have him lie down at that time; but he decided that the man desired that he should imitate the action of the English soldiers, a part of whose tactics in battle was a continual lying down upon the ground.

The Frenchman accordingly mimicked the ponderous movements of an English grenadier in getting down upon the ground, and the performance was highly pleasing to the Russians.

The Russians, moreover, were greatly delighted to see this proof of the extraordinary proficiency of one of their countrymen—from the plains of the Don, too—in speaking the French language. At this moment the French soldiers were called to "Attention!" and the interview ceased. A Russian officer called the soldier who had distinguished himself by his fluency in French, and said to him:

"Cossack, who taught you to talk French so well?"

"My brother, sir," said the Cossack. "He took care of the colonel's dogs last year."

"Well, what have the dogs to do with your French?"

"Ah, sir, they talk to the hunting dogs in French. When they want them to come, they say, '*Avance.*' When they want them to fetch a thing they say, '*Apporte,*' and when they want them to lie down, they say, *Couche!*'"

Those three words were all the French the Cossack knew, for *rum* may be said to be current in all European languages. Probably a reputation as a linguist was never gained on a smaller capital.—Youth's Companion.

Genuine Statesmanship.

Col. Hardfoot had been nominated for congress in one of the western states and a reporter of the Cyclone was out feeling the pulse of the people as to the colonel's qualifications.

"I suppose," he said to Maj. Speakeasy, "that you know Col. Hardfoot was nominated for congress over at Bildad this morning?"

"No; is that so?" exclaimed the major, with a pleasant smile.

"Yes; what kind of a statesman do you think the colonel will prove in Washington?"

"Bang up," and the major slapped his leg. "He ain't much, mebbe, on law makin', but he makes the finest hand at poker you ever see. And liquor! Why, the colonel kin ketch a three-inch stream from a nozzle and never waste a drop. Thar ain't no doubt about the colonel and we'll elect him er run the tail offen the burro that's agin him. You hear me!"—Detroit Free Press.

A BEAUTIFUL young lady died in Vienna from kissing a pet dog, who had been touching some infectious body. The Hartford Times opines that a pet young man would have been less dangerous.